

Informer

APRIL 2003

A newsletter for retired members of the State Employees' Retirement System of Illinois

Benefit Statement Enclosed

Your annual benefit statement is enclosed with this edition of the **Informer**. Review it carefully, since your statement contains information on group health, life insurance and beneficiaries. Refer to your statement during the annual Benefit Choice insurance enrollment period in May.

The statement also contains an annuitant identification card. Cut out the I.D. card and carry it with you as proof of your association with the state of Illinois for government and retiree discounts on airfare, hotels, restaurants, etc.

ERI Wrap-Up

The second Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) for the State Employees' Retirement System passed last spring and became effective on August 1. This is the first ERI that SERS has had since 1991, when a total of 4,605 employees took advantage of the program.

This year over 11,200 employees participated in the ERI (*see box below*). This volume of retirements has greatly affected the amount of retirement applications processed here at SERS.

Like all service organizations, our greatest asset is our employees. With a total agency staff of 82 full-time employees, 16 SERS employees (or 19.5%) took advantage of the ERI.

Mike Mory retired December 31, 2002 after serving 28 years as the Executive Secretary of SERS.

Also retiring under the ERI were **Terry Radliff**, Internal Auditor; **Bill Weir**, Division Manager of Administrative Services; **Gwen Hopkins**, Supervi-

sor of the Files Unit; Accounting Division employees **Mike Belden** and **Marlene Schultz**, the Field Services Division Manager, **John Sowinski**, and two Field Services staff, **Fred Fliege** and **Lee Brown**.

Also retiring was the receptionist in our Chicago Office, **Diantha Landowski**; **Julie Sinkus** from the Service and Refunds Division; **Deby Barron** and **Cathy Beard** from the Disability Section; **Karen Cunningham**, Supervisor of the Vouchering Section; **Pat Boyd**, Supervisor of the Insurance Section, and **Judy Watson** from the Group Insurance Section.

All of these employees represent hundreds of years of experience and knowledge in the pension industry and will be greatly missed.

As a result of Mike Mory's retirement, at the October 16, 2002 Board of Trustees meeting, **Robert Knox** was unanimously appointed as the new Executive Secretary of SERS, effective January 1, 2003. Bob has over 28 years of knowledge and experience with SERS and has served as the Associate Executive Secretary for the last 19 years.



Help us in welcoming our new Field Services staff. Dave Thompson is the new manager replacing John Sowinski. The MRR program will be run by Marlys Vala (right) replacing Lee Brown.

2002 ERI Statistics

June '02 Total Employees	83,011
Employees Eligible for ERI	21,367
Applications Received	10,411
Option 2 - Buy & Quit	809
Total ERI Participants	11,220
Key Employee Extensions	409

Opportunities After Retirement

A new program called the **Center for Lifelong Learning** was launched in Springfield at Lincoln Land Community College in the fall of 2002. The Center was created for adults 55 and older who enjoy "learning for the love of it!"

It offers classes taught in a fun, informal, noncompetitive environment. There are no exams, no grades, no credits—just the enjoyment of learning and meeting new friends along the way.

The Center strives to bring you interesting, enjoyable, and thought-provoking programs taught by the best faculty and community experts they can find.

From history to gardening, comparative religions to computer skills, the Center for Lifelong Learning has something for everyone.

For more information, or to request a complete schedule of courses, contact the Center for Lifelong Learning at 217-786-2477 or visit their website, (www.LLCC.edu).

If retirement isn't what you thought it would be and you've been thinking of starting your own business, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) can introduce you to the resources, planning assistance, and funding mechanisms you'll need to get started.

SCORE consists of volunteers from several areas of expertise whose collective business knowledge is exceeded only by their desire to help other people succeed in business.

They offer free, confidential advice to help you decide what business path you'd like to take. SCORE has eleven chapters in Illinois serving various regions, and a website (www.score.org) providing advice from a nationwide network of advisors.

For complete information, contact one of their chapters:

- Illinois Office - 618-466-4966
- Springfield - 217-492-4416, x111
- Chicago - 312-353-7724
- Southern Illinois - 618-453-6654.

The SERS Myths & Realities of Retirement (MRR) workshops for 2003 have been tremendously popular this year, probably due to the ERI.

Only one workshop date is still available:

May 29 Taylorville

Call 217-785-6979 to register or if you have questions.

Important SERS Telephone Numbers

**Income Tax Withholding,
1099-R, Address Change
217-785-7034**

**Insurance
217-785-7150**

**Retirement
217-785-7322**

**Death/Survivor Benefits
217-785-7366**

**Chicago Office
312-814-5853**

Federal Income Tax Withholding

Monthly benefits paid by SERS are subject to federal income tax withholding. If you have a request on file for federal income tax to be withheld, it will continue to be honored unless you request a change. To modify or end your withholding, you must notify SERS in writing.

If there is not a withholding election on file, taxes will be with-

held as if you are married claiming three exemptions. This married person with three exemptions would have no withholding taken on a benefit of less than \$1,320 per month, unless it is requested.

You may have to pay taxes and penalties at the end of the year if your estimated tax payment(s) are not adequate.

SERS FACTOID

*The number of
Americans age 65 and
older who are enrolled
in college: 49,000*



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